

The explosion and sinking of BP's Deepwater Horizon is leading to one of the single greatest environmental catastrophes in our nation's history. As the oil continues to leak from the ground at a rate of 210,000 gallons per day, this spill may be the costliest in our history as well.



The immediate priority now is to stop the leaking oil and clean up the mess. Numerous Congressional Committees are investigating the situation to determine what happened and are holding hearings to make sure that those responsible are held accountable.

Yet Congress also has the responsibility to reduce our dependence on oil and minimize the possibility of this type of event from happening again. We can do this by enacting comprehensive energy and climate legislation that will invest in clean, renewable energy sources that won't spill and destroy livelihoods. Harnessing energy from the sun, heat of the earth, and the wind and waves will create jobs and protect the planet from catastrophic oil spills.

While I will continue to push for comprehensive energy and climate legislation, I have also joined my colleagues in working to prevent future oil spills and make sure that those responsible, like BP, pay for this mess.

Here is some of the work I am *doing right* now to address the spill:

Stop All New Offshore Drilling I have co-sponsored legislation (H.R. 5222) to stop all new offshore drilling until the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Interior complete their investigation of the Deepwater Horizon.

Delay New Exploratory Drilling in the Arctic

The Deepwater Horizon explosion has demonstrated how catastrophic an oil drilling accident can be. A spill of this magnitude in Alaska could leave oil in the waters off Alaska for decades, killing endangered whales, seals, fish, and birds, and destroying feeding grounds. Shell Oil has said they are still moving forward with plans to have drill bits in place in Alaska in less than 60 days – a reality that remains possible.

To be sure lessons learned from the report on Deepwater Horizon are applied across the board in the Arctic and elsewhere, I have joined colleagues in sending a letter to the administration calling on them to delay new exploratory drilling until the report can be analyzed and safety and environmental concerns can be addressed.

No Offshore Drilling in Oregon

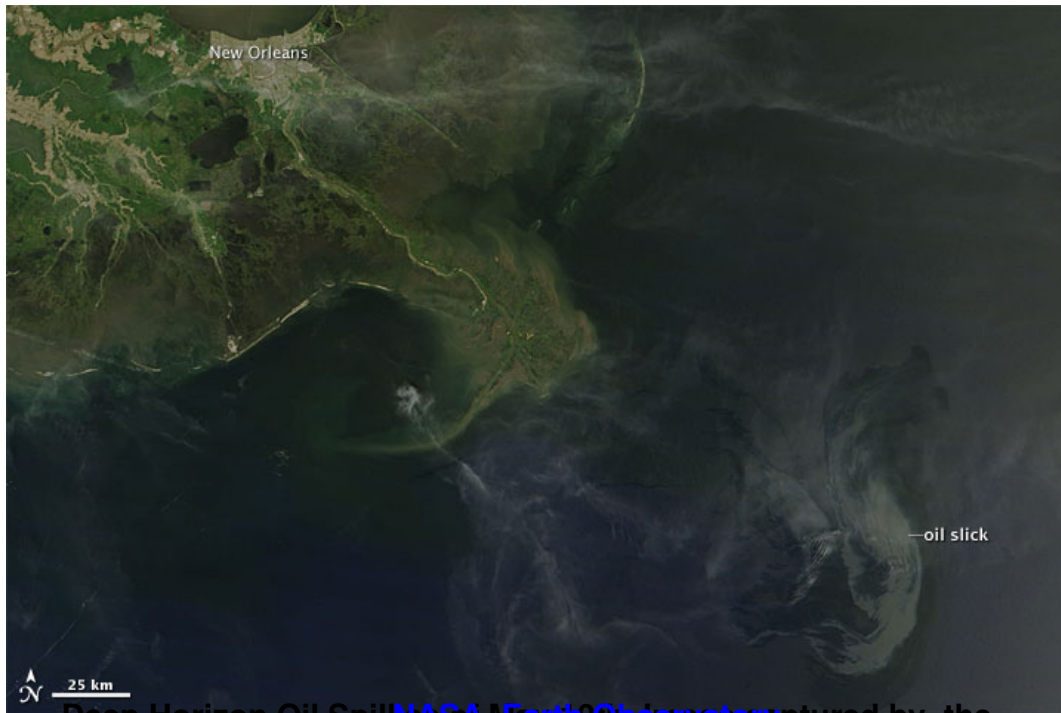
I have joined my Oregon colleagues Reps. Wu, DeFazio, and Schrader in co-sponsoring the West Coast Ocean Protection Act (H.R. 5213), which will permanently prohibit offshore drilling on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) in federal waters off the coast of Oregon, California and Washington. Along with the prohibition on drilling in Oregon's state waters, this bill will ensure that Oregon never faces the environmental disaster currently happening in the Gulf Coast.

The Big Oil Bailout Prevention Act

I have signed onto legislation, the Big Oil Bailout Prevention Act (H.R. 5214), which would raise the liability cap from \$75 million to \$10 billion. While BP has said it will cover all "all necessary and appropriate clean-up costs," the impact of the spill goes beyond clean up.

The spill will cause great economic damage to the fishing industry, the tourism industry, small businesses, and taxpayers. Companies like BP should pay not just for clean-up costs, but the economic damages resulting from the mess they caused. The bill would also:

- Eliminate the \$1 billion per incident cap on claims against the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund and allow community responders to access the fund for preparation and mitigation up front, rather than waiting for reimbursement later.
- Allow claimants to collect from future revenues of the fund, with interest, if damages claims exceed the amount in the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund (currently \$1.6 billion).
- Eliminate the \$500 million cap on natural resources damages



Deep Horizon Oil Spill NASA Earth Observatory captured by the
Related Articles

{loadposition related}